

Michigan Department of Education
Michigan Department of Community Health

Critical Communication Between School Nurses and School Staff

MODEL GUIDELINE

Original Date of Issue: 2014

Foreword

These guidelines contain recommendations for minimum standards of care and current best practices for the health service topics addressed. They have been reviewed by the school nurse Practice Subcommittee of the Michigan Statewide School Nurse Task Force as a means to provide consistent and safe care to the students. Specific laws and regulations that direct school nursing practice or other health services are identified in the guidelines.

Purpose

The purpose of this guideline is to provide protocol for communication between the school nurse and other school staff that assures safe practice for students, nurses, and other unlicensed school staff.

Introduction

Communication between the school staff and student nurses with the school nurses is essential. Follow-up of identified health issues by the school nurse is an integral part of the school health program. The school staff/school nurse team must constantly make informed decisions regarding student health management.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Immediate contact with the school nurse or school nurse program supervisor is required for the following situations:

1. Suicide threats or attempts, depressed students (also notify the principal or designee). (Unless handled by another professional.)
2. Alleged child abuse/neglect (also notify the principal or designee). Document objective information; i.e., "bruises noted on right arm" or "red mark on leg. " (Unless handled by another professional.)
3. Assistance in determining if 911 should be called.
4. All 911 calls (also notify the principal or designee).
5. Errors made in carrying out proper procedure; e.g., a medication error.
6. Lack of family follow-through with needed emergency care. Immediate notification if student is acutely ill; otherwise, notify within the same day (also notify the principal or designee).
7. Acute drug/alcohol-related concerns (also notify principal or designee).
8. Any unusual health-related incident.
9. Any school emergency (i.e., crisis or shelter in place).
10. Allergic reactions.

Same Day contact with the school nurse or school nurse program supervisor is required for the following situations:

1. Parent, student or school staff requests to obtain or review health records.
2. Pregnancy concerns.
3. Reportable communicable diseases.
4. Exclusions of students for possibly contagious health reasons (i.e., rash, conjunctivitis).

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5. Student visit to the health room with symptoms of asthma, requiring treatment, immediate if symptoms not resolved or improved.
6. Drug/alcohol-related concerns (also notify principal or designee).
7. Student states: "I have to see the nurse today," and will not communicate needs to anyone else.

Medication Issues

- a. All new medication or treatment orders.
- b. Concerns regarding any medication or treatment orders.
- c. Inability to locate student for medication within the 30 minutes allowed.
- d. Lack of medication for use in school after telephone call has been made to parent or guardian.
- e. Accidental loss or damage of medication dose as long as dose is able to be administered.

Note: Designated school staff who has been trained to administer medications should document notification of the school nurse or school nurse program supervisor about any situations regarding medications on the back side of the 'Medication Administration Record.' The notation must be signed and dated.

Situations which should be reported to the school nurse or school nurse program supervisor **at the next opportunity (within 48 hours):**

1. Ongoing head lice concerns in same family or classroom.
2. Frequent health room visitors.
3. Student concerns which may need follow-up or referral.
4. Lice infestation - new cases.

Documentation

All contact with the school nurse must be documented on the 'Communication Worksheet' (see attached).

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Adapted from Anne Arundel County (MD) School Health Guidelines/Nurse Alert 2008

COMMUNICATION WORKSHEET

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